



## News Release

**For Immediate Release:**

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### **Cluster of Illness Under Investigation** *Similar Illnesses Involving a Common Exposure*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH), along with several local health departments, is waiting for lab confirmation to determine what is responsible for making several people sick after camping on the west side of Utah Lake. Due to the nature of the symptoms, it's possible they may have contracted tularemia. Tularemia is a bacterial disease that is usually spread by tick and deerfly bites. It can also be spread by other arthropods (e.g., mosquitoes) or direct contact with an infected animal. Typical symptoms include fever and swollen lymph nodes (that may be filled with pus) near the site of the insect bite.

The best preventive measures for outdoor enthusiasts include:

- Wear long, light-colored pants tucked into socks or boots, and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Stay on trails when walking or hiking, and try to avoid areas with tall grass.
- Use a repellent that contains DEET and follow directions on the label.
- Avoid any direct contact with wild animals (especially rabbits and rodents), their droppings or carcasses.

If you have been outdoors and have what appear to be infected insect bites, along with a fever and swollen lymph nodes, see your physician as soon as possible or call your local health department and mention tularemia. Tularemia is a treatable infection, but requires use of antibiotics that are different from what a physician would usually choose for a skin infection.

For information on specific counties involved: Salt Lake Valley Health Department, Pam Davenport, Public Information Officer, (801) 468-2757; Utah County Health

Department, Lance Madigan, Public Information Officer, (801) 851-7531, Southwest Utah Public Health Department, Jordan Mathis, Public Information Officer, (435) 986-2593, and Weber/Morgan Health Department, Lori Buttars, Public Information Officer, (801) 399-7114.

**Information on contacting your Local Health Department can be found at:**  
[http://health.utah.gov/epi/LHD%20Contact%20Information 24 7\(web%20list\).pdf](http://health.utah.gov/epi/LHD%20Contact%20Information%2024%207(web%20list).pdf)

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*